

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MOGADI 00023 01 OF 02 061138Z

12

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

----- 068663

P R 061059Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2526

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOGADISCIO 0023

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID PFOR SO UR US MARR

SUBJECT: TALK WITH PRESIDENT SIAD: US-SOMALI RELATIONS

1. SUMMARY: DURING ONE AND HALF HOUR DISCUSSION WITH ME JANUARY 6, PRESIDENT SIAD STRESSED HIS SATISFACTION WITH HIS OCT. 11 MEETING WITH PRESIDENT FORD AND HIS DESIRE FOR BETTER US-SOMALI RELATIONS. HE SAID HE HAD TAKEN ACTION LOOKING TOWARD US NAVAL VISIT TO SOMALIA AND TOWARD CANCELLATION OF SOMALI REGISTRATION OF SHIPS TRADING WITH NORTH VIET-NAM AND CUBA. I BELIEVE SIAD GENUINELY DESIRES IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS. THE TWO STEPS HE HAS TAKEN (PARTICULARLY THE ACTION ON SOMALI FLAG SHIPPING) REPRESENT CONCRETE ACTION TOWARD THIS END ON PART OF SOMALIS WHICH HAS BEEN CONSPICUOUSLY LACKING TO DATE. I BELIEVE SIAD'S RECEPTION BY PRESIDENT FORD AND HIS FIRST LOOK AT US HAD MUCH TO DO WITH THIS, AS DID OUR PROMPT DROUGHT RELIEF ACTION.

2. I BELIEVE SOME ADDITIONAL DROUGHT ASSISTANCE (AS ALREADY RECOMMENDED MOGADISCIO 1871) AND (AFTER SOMALIS CANCEL REGISTRATION OF SHIPS IN CUBA AND NUN TRADE) A VERY MODEST ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, PERHAPS IN AGRICULTURAL FIELD, WOULD BE SOUND AND BENEFICIAL US RESPONSE TO SOMALIA'S ACTIONS. SIAD IS PRAGMATIST WHOSE POSITION

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PAGE 02 MOGADI 00023 01 OF 02 061138Z

WITHIN GSDR SEEMS STRONGER THAN EVER. IF HE FINDS THAT

CONCRETE ACTIONS ON HIS PART ARE MET BY CONCRETE ACTIONS ON OURS, HE WILL BE WILLING AND PROBABLY ABLE TO CONTINUE THE PROCESS. END SUMMARY.

3. AS THIS WAS OUR FIRST MEETING SINCE SIAD'S RETURN FROM WASHINGTON (HE HAS BEEN AWAY DURING MUCH OF INTERVENING PERIOD), HE BRIEFED ME AT SOME LENGTH ABOUT HIS VISIT AND HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH PRESIDENT FORD. HIS DESCRIPTION PARALLELED THAT GIVEN IN STATE 231306 (NOTAL) ALTHOUGH HE SAID HE HAD "ASKED PRESIDENT FOR HELPING HAND" IN SOMALIA'S WAR AGAINST POVERTY, IGNORANCE AND DISEASE. SIAD SAID HE WAS VERY PLEASED WITH RECEPTION HE HAD RECEIVED, THAT HE HAD SPOKEN FRANKLY, THAT PRESIDENT FORD HAD LISTENED CAREFULLY AND THAT SIAD WAS CONVINCED MEETING WOULD HAVE LASTED MUCH LONGER HAD IT NOT RPT NOT BEEN THAT PRESIDENT FORD HAD ANOTHER PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED ENGAGEMENT. I SAID MY IMPRESSION WAS THAT US AUTHORITIES WERE WELL PLEASED WITH PRESIDENT SIAD'S VISIT. THEY FELT HE HAD GIVEN THEM FULL AND FRANK EXPLANATION OF SOMALIA'S VIEWS.

4. SIAD SAID THAT UPON HIS RETURN TO SOMALIA HE HAD TAKEN ACTION TO CLEAR WAY FOR US NAVAL VISIT (SEPTEL). HE HAD ALSO DECIDED TO CANCEL SOMALI REGISTRATION OF SHIPS TRADING WITH NUN AND CUBA. SOMALIA GOT LITTLE MONETARY GAIN FROM THESE CHARTER ARRANGEMENTS. HE HAD INDEED BEEN READY TO CANCEL THE ARRANGEMENT FIVE YEARS AGO BUT WHEN US "PRESSURED" AND "THREATENED" HIM ABOUT IT HE OF COURSE COULD NOT RPT NOT YIELD. NOW THAT FIVE YEARS HAD PASSED, HE FELT SOMALIA COULD TAKE THIS ACTION. SRC HAD AGREED AND ALL THAT NOW REMAINED WERE FORMALITIES OF CANCELLING CONTRACTS, ETC., WHICH MIGHT TAKE TWO OR THREE MONTHS.

5. I SAID USG ALSO WANTED BETTER RELATIONS WITH SOMALIA AND THAT I WAS SEEKING WAYS TO PROMOTE THIS. I THOUGHT GREATER MOVEMENT OF OFFICIALS AND PERSONNEL BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES MIGHT HELP. THERE WERE OFTEN MEETINGS AND SYMPOSIA IN US FROMWHICH SOMALIS MIGHT BENEFIT AND IT WOULD BE GOOD FOR CONGRESSIONAL AND OTHER US LEADERS TO

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 MOGADI 00023 01 OF 02 061138Z

COME TO SOMALIA. SIAD MADE NO RPT NO COMMENT ABOUT TRAVEL OF SOMALIS TO US. HE AGREED THAT IT WOULD BE GOOD FOR CONGRESSMEN AND OTHERS TO COME TO SOMALIA, PROVIDED INDIVIDUALS CONCERNED WERE ONES WHO UNDERSTOOD THAT SOMALIA IS "IN FORMATIVE STAGE" AND WOULD NOT RPT NOT CRITICIZE LACK OF POLITICAL PARTIES, PARLIAMENT, ETC.

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PAGE 01 MOGADI 00023 02 OF 02 061143Z

12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MOGADISCIO 0023

EXDIS

6. COMMENT: SIAD'S DECISION TO CUT OFF SOMALI FLAG
TRADE TO NVN AND CUBA IS OF COURSE VERY IMPORTANT
SYMBOLICAL STEP IN HIS RELATIONS WITH US--AND WITH
USSR. IT IS THEREFORE IMPORTANT WITHIN CONTEXT
OF US-SOMALI RELATIONS THAT THIS ACTION BE TAKEN, DESPITE
RECENT AMENDMENT TO AID AUTHORIZATION WHICH ALLOWS
US PRESIDENT TO WAIVE PROVISIONS BARRING AID TO
SOMALIA BECAUSE OF FLAG SHIPPING QUESTION. SOMALI ACTION WOULD
OF COURSE ALSO BE HIGHLY DESIRABLE FROM POINT OF VIEW OF OUR
RESTRICTIONS ON TRADE WITH NVN AND CUBA.

7. I BELIEVE IT EXCEEDINGLY IMPORTANT BOTH IN ORDER TO HAVE
THIS DECISION CARRIED OUT AND FROM POINT OF VIEW OF OUR GENERAL
RELATIONS WITH GSDR, FOR US TO MAINTAIN AN ATTITUDE OF
ABSOLUTE DISCRETION AND "NO COMMENT" UNTIL AFTER SOMALI
ACTION. I WOULD URGE THAT, TO EXTENT POSSIBLE, WE REFRAIN
FROM COMMENT EVEN AT THAT TIME. SELF-SERVING AS SIAD'S
DESCRIPTION OF SCENARIO OF FIVE YEARS AGO IS, IT IS
NEVERTHELESS TRUE THAT GSDR AND SIAD PERSONALLY ARE
EXCEEDINGLY PRICKLY ABOUT INTERFERENCE IN WHAT THEY
CONSIDER THEIR INTERNAL AFFAIRS. EVEN A ROUTINE EX-
PRESSION OF US GRATIFICATION BEFORE ACTION CONSUMATED
COULD AROUSE SOMALI SENSITIVITIES. WE CAN ASSUME THERE
IS CONTINUING STRONG OPPOSITION TO THIS STEP BY SOME
WITHIN GSDR AND BY SOVIETS, CHINESE, CUBANS, NORTH
KOREANS, ETC., WHO ALL HAVE CONSIDERABLE WEIGHT HERE.
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PAGE 02 MOGADI 00023 02 OF 02 061143Z

THESE FORCES WILL BE LOOKING FOR ANY US REACTION THEY CAN EXPLOIT. FOR THESE REASONS AND BECAUSE HE MAY NOT RPT NOT YET BE AWARE OF THE ACTION BY THE SRC, I WOULD SUGGEST THIS NOT RPT NOT BE MENTIONED TO AMBASSADOR ADDOU. IF HE BRINGS IT UP, I WOULD RECOMMEND LITTLE OR NO RPT NO COMMENT.

8. IN VIEW OF THIS APPARENTLY IMPENDING SOMALI ACTION, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD NOT RPT NOT INITIATE ANY ACTION TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF "NATIONAL INTERESTS" WAIVER CLAUSE TO EXTEND ASSISTANCE TO SOMALIA AT THIS TIME. IF SOMALIS DO TAKE THIS ACTION, HOWEVER, I THINK WE SHOULD GIVE MOST SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION TO A VERY MODEST ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION FIELD WOULD PROBABLY BE BEST. THERE IS GREAT ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY HERE. THE US HAS GREAT EXPERTISE IN THIS FIELD AND WE HAVE SUCCESSFULLY ASSISTED SOMALIA IN THIS AREA UNDER THE PREVIOUS REGIME. SUCH A PROGRAM WOULD SEEM VERY SUITABLE RESPONSE TO WHAT WOULD FOR GSDR BE A DIFFICULT AND SIGNIFICANT GESTURE TOWARD US. IT WOULD ALSO ACCORD WITH OUR OVERALL PRIORITY AIM OF EXPANDING FOOD PRODUCTION AND FORESTALLING FUTURE REQUESTS FOR DISASTER ASSISTANCE.
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